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On June 6, 2013, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a full committee hearing to review programs and activities of the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR), Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Rob Portman (R-OH) urged Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell to consider partnerships with the private sector to improve funding for the National Park Service (NPS) that has been limited due to the sequestration. Secretary Jewell reported that the DOI and NPS Director Jon Jarvis are “very willing to support and enhance private sector engagement.” However, Jewel pointed out that “Private philanthropy should be the margin of excellence for the parks, not the margin for survival” and that the federal government needs to step up to support these assets.

A report released May 23, 2013 by the House Committee on Natural Resources detailed the effects of sequestration on the NPS. The report found that, among other impacts, sequestration will delay much-needed maintenance, reduce hours, delay openings, close campgrounds, and reduce the number of employees hired to meet seasonal demands. A report released March 19, 2013 by the National Parks Hospitality Association and National Parks Conservation Association suggests several possible funding sources, including establishing a National Park Endowment based on non-federal contributions and income from developing natural resources on federal land.
